
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2966

Brief Description: Establishing a state meat inspection program.

Sponsors: Representatives Taylor, Shea, Chandler, Hinkle, Johnson, Kretz and Conway.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the State Meat Inspection Program for all livestock produced and meat processed within the state.
- Creates the Meat Inspection Account.

Hearing Date: 1/28/10

Staff: Leslie Ryan-Connelly (786-7166).

Background:

All meat for public sale is inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture in compliance with the Federal Meat Inspection Act. The Washington State Department of Agriculture (Department) has been delegated authority to conduct meat inspections for certain facilities which only slaughter or prepare meat for consumption by the owner of the animal.

There are three types of facilities that slaughter or prepare meet for consumption by the owner of the animal:

- Custom Meat Facilities are facilities that process meat.
- Custom Farm Slaughterers are mobile slaughter units either at the animal owner's farm or an approved site.
- Custom Slaughter Establishments are fixed slaughter facilities.

All of the three types of custom facilities listed above must be licensed by the Department.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Custom facilities may not sell any meat that is processed in the facility. Instead, custom facilities slaughter or process animals for end use by the owner of the animal. The custom facility owner is paid by the owner of the animal to slaughter the animal and prepare the meat. The meat may not be sold either wholesale or retail.

Summary of Bill:

The State Meat Inspection Program (Program) is created to inspect all intrastate livestock produced and meat prepared from such livestock. The program includes any meat that is prepared by a custom meat facility that will be available for public sale or consumption by the owner of the animal. A custom meat facility is a facility that prepares meat for intrastate consumption for both the owner of the livestock and sale to the public. Inspected meat that is meant for sale to the public must be kept separate from meat prepared for owner consumption.

A person seeking to operate a custom meat facility or custom farm slaughterhouse must first receive a license from the Department of Agriculture (Department). The Department has the authority to develop rules to implement the State Meat Inspection Program. The Department is responsible for:

- ensuring sanitary operations;
- identification and tagging of meat food animals (cattle, swine, sheep and goats);
- standards for handling and storing meat and meat products; and
- standards for slaughtering and processing of meat food birds (flightless birds such as chickens, geese, and similar birds).

License application requirements and fees are stipulated. Definitions are included for custom meat facility, meat food animal, meat food bird, official establishment, prepared, uninspected meat, and Washington inspected meat.

The Department is authorized to conduct inspections, investigate violations, and issue subpoenas. Should someone fail to comply with the provisions of the program, keep or maintain records, or provide access to their facility, their license may be denied, suspended, or revoked. Civil penalties for failure to comply are set at no more than \$1,000 per violation per day. Each violation is a separate offense.

The Meat Inspection Account is created. Moneys collected for civil penalties are deposited into the Meat Inspection Account. Expenditures from the Meat Inspection Account can only be used to implement the State Meat Inspection Program.

Any federal law, rule, order or other act by the federal government violating the provisions of The State Meat Inspection Program is declared invalid and is not recognized by the state.

Any county or city may adopt more restrictive ordinances for the handling and sale of inspected meat within the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.